

# Fall Creek Watershed Analysis

Palisades Ranger District,  
Caribou-Targhee National Forest

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## **FALL CREEK WATERSHED ANALYSIS**

January 2002

The Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 directs the USDA Forest Service to manage the renewable surface resources of the Forests for multiple uses and to provide those resources (products and services) at a conservative rate that is sustained over time. The Fall Creek Watershed Analysis Area features a diversity of resource uses and landownership. The competing uses of some resources in particular places within the analysis area have limited the decision space of Forest Officials. The watershed analysis process allows decision-makers and their staffs an opportunity to step back and take a holistic, interdisciplinary watershed-level look at an analysis area. It is a chance to assess the resource uses and ensure they occur at a sustainable level. The watershed analysis process culminates with a list of recommendations the Forest Officials can use to address resource management challenges and opportunities.

### **Project Area Description**

The Fall Creek watershed analysis area includes the Fall Creek, Pritchard Creek, and Garden Creek Drainages. These are streams that flow into the south side of the South Fork of the Snake River. This area includes approximately 60,000 acres of the Palisades Ranger District, Caribou-Targhee National Forest. The Bureau of Land Management manages approximately 700 acres of the analysis area. Approximately 1,600 acres are privately owned. The private land is primarily used as ranchland.

Primary resource uses on the Forest and BLM lands include livestock grazing, motorized recreation, fishing, hunting, camping, mining, firewood collecting, and logging. Management activities also include prescribed burning and fire suppression. Livestock grazing (both cattle and sheep) is a historic use of the analysis area. While some areas are improving, other areas have shown little improvement from historic grazing impacts. The proximity of the Fall Creek Drainage to Idaho Falls and the ease of accessibility in the drainage make it an attractive location for motorized vehicles use. The frequent use of Fall Creek by motorized vehicles is evident and has created some impacts upon the landscape, including illegally created trails. It has also required an increase in enforcement. The analysis area is a special place for fish and wildlife. Yellowstone cutthroat trout occur in all 3 of the major drainages and the analysis area is important habitat for elk, moose, and deer. Fall Creek features travertine mineral deposits which are also mined in the analysis area. The analysis area is a popular location for firewood collecting and limited logging has occurred in the area in the past. Areas of conifer encroachment upon aspen stands and increased ladder fuels created by multiple layer forests have attracted the attention of fire management specialists. Prescribed burns are conducted in the analysis area and recently are being ignited in the Pritchard Creek Drainage.

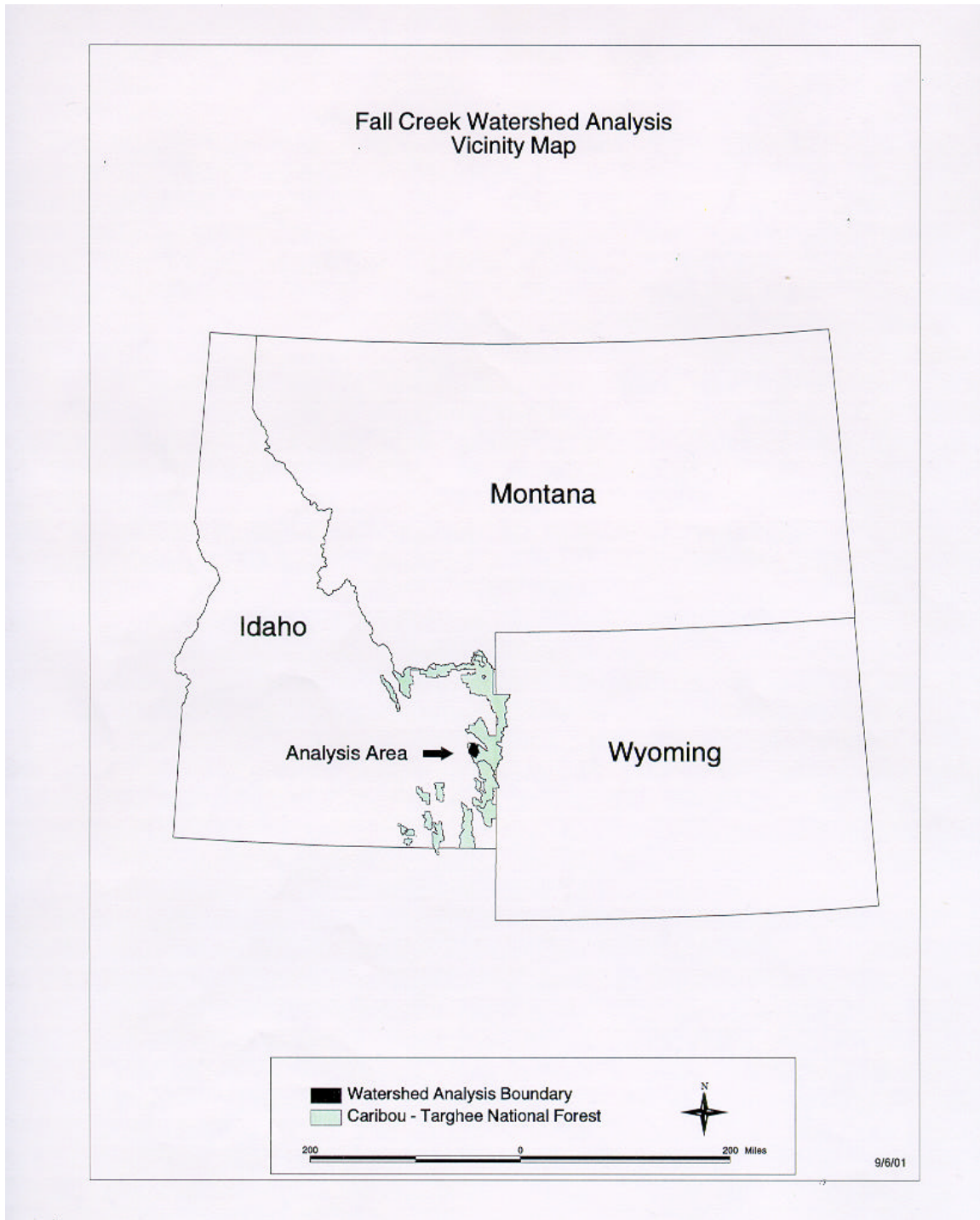


Figure 1. Fall Creek Watershed Analysis Area Map



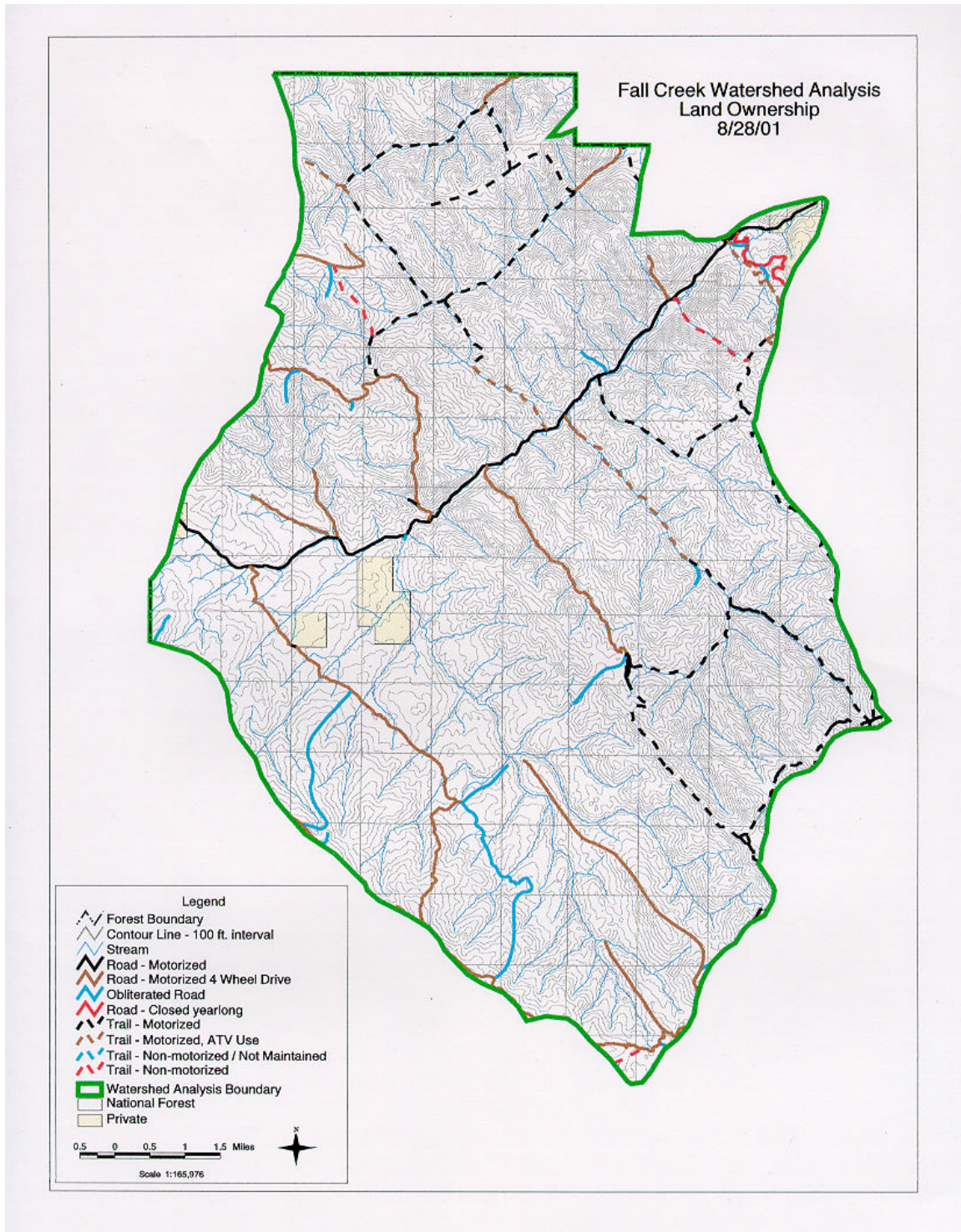


Figure 2. Land Ownership within the Fall Creek Analysis Area

## Watershed Analysis Process

The purpose of watershed analysis is to develop and document a scientifically based understanding of the processes and interactions occurring within a watershed. This document is our current understanding of the Fall Creek Watershed Analysis Area, including Fall, Pritchard, and Garden Creek Drainages.

A watershed analysis is an interdisciplinary process that compares the past and current conditions of an analysis area to develop an understanding of resource trends. The report culminates with several recommendations developed to address the identified trends.

No decisions are made with this document. The findings represent a foundation on which to develop site-specific project proposals and base specific decisions.

The Fall Creek Watershed Analysis was conducted by a Forest Service interdisciplinary team, with data source assistance from neighboring citizens and agencies. Little new data were collected by those who wrote this document. Rather, they primarily used existing information, including surveys, documents, maps, photos, and anecdotal information.

## Contributors

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